



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN SEPTEMBER 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

The Council for The Regional Municipality of Peel (Region of Peel) by resolution 2002-920 endorsed an implementation strategy in support of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA). This document represents the Region of Peel's first accessibility plan under the ODA. The document has been prepared by a working group with representation from the various programs and services in the Region of Peel with consultation from the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

While the plan represents a key step in the overall process of ensuring that the Region of Peel facilities and services are fully accessible, it builds upon the numerous initiatives that have and continue to be undertaken throughout the organization. The document also serves as an educational and awareness tool on disability issues. The goal is to prevent barriers in the future as the Region of Peel continues to identify and remove barriers.

The document is organized into various sections. An executive summary is included to provide the reader with a high level overview of the report. The following sections summarize the requirements and definitions of the ODA, provide a discussion of the process followed and discuss the barriers that have been identified and the conclusion of the report.

This document represents the first of many accessibility plans that will be prepared annually to reflect the continued dedication of the Region of Peel in meeting the commitments made in its long-term strategic plan ***“Directions for Success – Investing in Peel’s Future”*** relating to accessibility.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Ontarians with Disability Act, 2001* (ODA) requires that each municipality develop an accessibility plan each year. The plan must address various issues, all focusing on the identification of barriers to accessibility.

The Region of Peel formed a staff Work Group with representatives from each program and service area in order to develop the plan.

Each member of the Work Group identified barriers in their areas. The barriers were collected and grouped in four categories:

Attitudinal:

- There is no consistent and ongoing educational program to increase the awareness of Regional employees regarding recognition and elimination of existing and potential barriers.

Communication:

- There is lack of a consistent approach to ensure that all communication in various forms does not present barriers.

Facilities:

- Some Regional facilities still have physical barriers that need review and elimination.
- There is lack of a consistent approach to reduce barriers in the design of new or renovated facilities as well as the acquisition of new leasehold properties.

Service Delivery:

- There are no consistent policies regarding barrier reduction in service delivery and citizen participation in Regional government.

The working group developed a series of next steps that included:

1. Establish and hire an Accessibility Coordinator position within the Corporate Services department, to coordinate, manage and monitor the implementation of the Region of Peel's Accessibility Plan and accessibility planning process to ensure compliance with the ODA (including consultation with the AAC).
2. Develop an Accessibility Planning Policy.
3. Incorporate accessibility planning into the next Strategic Plan renewal.
4. Integrate accessibility planning into the Service Strategy/Business Plans (SSBP) process.
5. Address the key findings of the initial barrier identification as noted in Section 5.8 (See also Appendix II).
6. Identify which by-laws, policies, programs, practices, services, facilities and infrastructure requirements will be reviewed in greater detail and initiate necessary changes.
7. Develop guidelines to ensure accessibility assessment of all new programs, services and facilities.
8. Conduct consultation with area municipalities on accessibility issues.
9. Monitor the progress of the work plan and report to Council.
10. Establish educational programs to increase the awareness of Regional employees regarding recognition and elimination of existing and potential barriers.
11. Establish a central reference document for regular reporting of changes made by program and service areas.

Input for the plan was sought from the AAC.

The 2003 plan will serve as a starting point for future years' annual plans allowing for development of the plan including identification of required financial resources, formal education programs and work plans.

3. ODA OVERVIEW

3.1 ODA REQUIREMENTS

3.1.1 GENERAL

The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to enable them to become involved in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.

Under the ODA, all Ontario government ministries as well as municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations have a legal obligation to prepare annual accessibility plans and to make these plans available to the public. Organizations with obligations under the ODA must consult with people with disabilities when preparing their plans to ensure that they reflect local needs, concerns and priorities. Accessibility plans are intended to address existing barriers to people with disabilities and to prevent new barriers from being established.

3.1.2 MUNICIPAL REQUIREMENTS

The ODA requires that municipal accessibility plans address barriers in the municipality's by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services in the following ways:

1. Report on the measures that the municipality has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Describe the measures in place to ensure that the municipality assesses its proposals for by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for people with disabilities.

3. List the by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services that the municipality will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the municipality intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Make the accessibility plan available to the public.

The ODA also imposes other obligations on municipalities either directly or through amendments to other Ontario statutes such as:

1. **access must be considered:** when buying goods and services, and in planning and subdivision approval;
2. **business licences:** municipalities may stipulate accessibility;
3. **new social housing:** ensuring it includes a percentage of modified units;
4. **parking penalties:** municipal enforcement of increased fines for misuse of the Disabled Person Parking Permits and misuse of designated parking spaces established in municipal by-laws; and
5. **improved access to municipal elections:** considering access when selecting locations for voting.

3.1.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Public Transportation Organizations are required to prepare accessibility plans in essentially the same manner as municipalities.

3.1.4 DISABILITY

The ODA adopts the broad definition for disability that is set out in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Disability is:

1. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
4. a mental disorder; or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

3.1.5 BARRIERS

A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communicational barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Barrier types include:

BARRIER TYPE	EXAMPLE
Attitudinal	A recreational swimming program which discourages people with developmental disabilities from participating.
Physical	A doorknob cannot be operated by an elderly person with limited upper-body mobility and strength.
Architectural	A hallway or doorway that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter.
Informational	Typefaces that are too small to be read by a person with limited vision.
Communicational	A professor who talks loudly when addressing a deaf student.
Technological	Information on a municipal Web site, which cannot be accessed by a person who is blind and has reading software for a computer.
Policy/Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly.

4. REGION OF PEEL OVERVIEW

The Region of Peel is an upper-tier municipality located in southern Ontario within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and consists of the City of Brampton, the City of Mississauga and the Town of Caledon. It covers 1,225 square kilometres (473 square miles), has an estimated population of 1,054,000 and a work force of approximately 553,600. It provides community and infrastructure services that are effectively administered over a large geographic area.

The municipality is governed by a Regional Council of 22 members with representation as follows:

Regional Chair (Elected by Council)
The Mayor of each of the area municipalities (3)
Nine (9) members of Council from the City of Mississauga
Five (5) members of Council from the City of Brampton
Four (4) members of Council from the Town of Caledon

4.1 KEY SERVICES DELIVERED BY THE REGION OF PEEL

The Region of Peel directly provides many of the services that impact the day-to-day activities of its residents including:

- Water and Wastewater
- Roads
- TransHelp
- Ontario Works
- Children's Services
- Ambulance and Emergency Programs
- Long-Term Care
- Public Health
- Heritage
- Housing Policy and Program
- Regional Planning

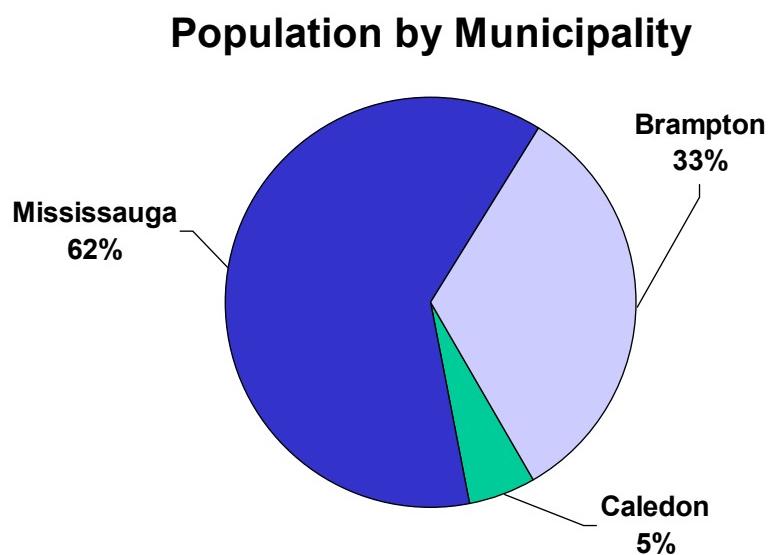
4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

In developing the Accessibility Plan, consideration has been given both to the current make up of the Region of Peel and to the potential growth and changes in the make up of the community in future years. As well as the age of the population, the physical size and urban form of the Region of Peel will impact planning for accessibility.

There are several programs in the Region of Peel that deliver services to the disabled community and that address accessibility issues. Each program, as part of its formal planning process closely considers the demographics of the groups that they service.

4.2.1 CURRENT POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

The Region of Peel's Planning department estimates the population of the Region of Peel to be 1,054,000 people. The population distribution is shown below.



As the planning process develops over time, a more detailed review of disability by location and projected disability by location will be undertaken to better determine the distribution of the demand for services.

4.2.2 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE REGION OF PEEL

According to the 2000/2001 Canadian Community Health Survey, approximately 164,000 persons in the Region of Peel or 17% reported an activity limitation due to disability. Activity limitation in this survey was defined as population aged 12 and over who reported being limited in certain activities on a continuing basis (at least 6 months) because of a physical condition, mental condition or health problem.

In addition to the mobility related disabilities, an Ontario Ministry of Health study found that 19% of the general population has some form of mental illness; that 2% consider themselves to be disabled due to a mental illness; and approximately 10% of the general population (Ontario) have some form of learning disability.

It is clear that significant portions of the population in the Region of Peel are affected by some type of disability and potentially have accessibility issues.

A breakdown of the various disabilities as found in the Ontario Ministry of Health study is as follows:

DISABILITY	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IMPACTED
Mobility	72
Pain	67
Hearing Impaired	30
Visually Impaired	17
Psychological	15
Learning	13
Memory	12
Speech	11
Development	4
Other	3

4.2.3 REGION OF PEEL'S FUTURE TRENDS

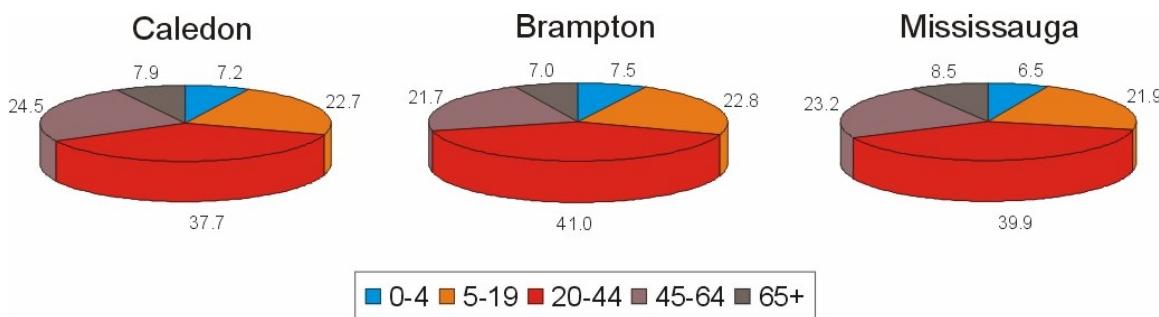
Over the 28-year period since 1973, the Region of Peel's population has increased from 306,288 to 988,948 (2001 census population), an increase of 682,660 or 223%. By 2021, the Region of Peel's population is expected to increase to 1,388,000, an average of about 20,000 persons per year. The projected distribution of the population is:

YEAR	PEEL	BRAMPTON	CALEDON	MISSISSAUGA	UNALLOCATED
2004	1,080,000	380,000	55,000	645,000	
2014	1,269,000	505,000	72,000	692,000	
2024	1,437,000	604,000	84,000	727,000	22,000
2031	1,524,000	608,000	84,000	750,000	82,000

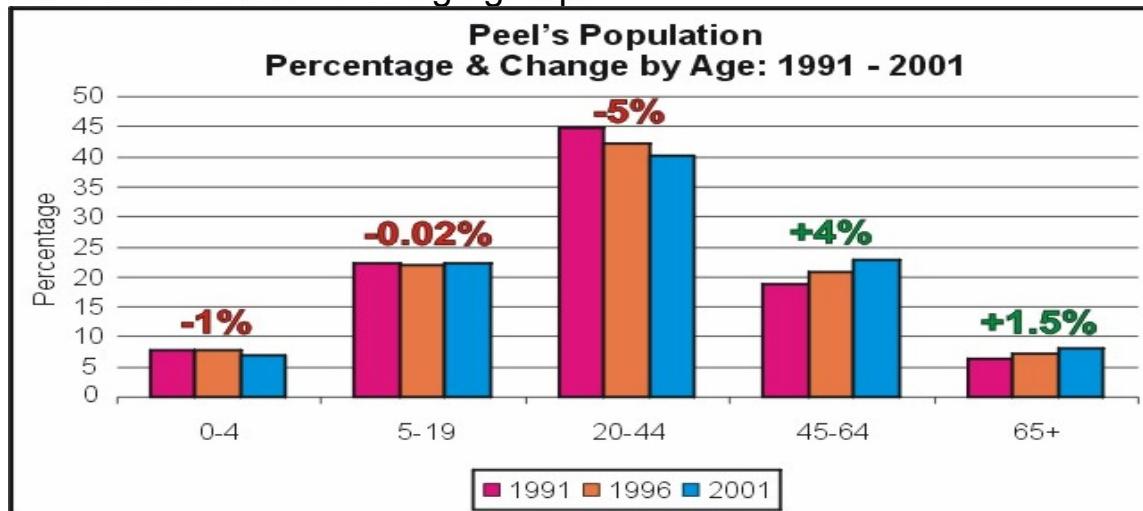
The Region of Peel's 2001 population represents a 16% increase over 1996 census levels. In fact, the growth rate remained unchanged from that experienced between 1991 and 1996. In trying to determine the increase in the number of residents that will experience some challenges to accessibility, a review of past trends may assist.

The Region of Peel's median age of 34.4 is well below the national average of 37.6. Brampton registered the youngest median age (32.9). Caledon had the oldest (35.9), while Mississauga's median age stood at 35.0. A strong 30% of the Region of Peel's population was over 45, while 7% was less than four years old.

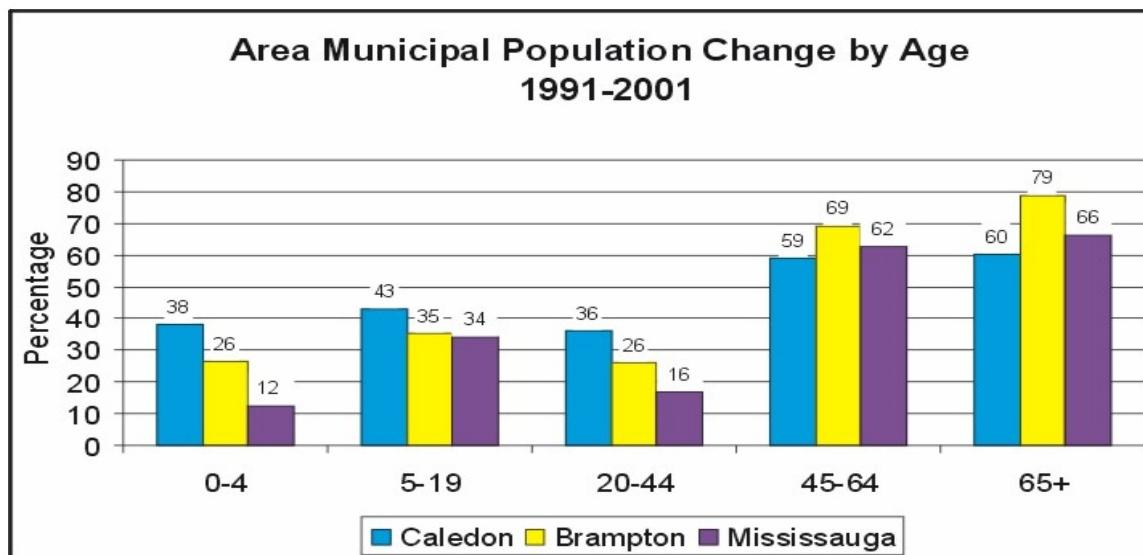
Between 1991 and 2001 distinct trends in age structure are evident. The Region of Peel's population increased in all age groups over a 10-year period. The most significant gains were noted among seniors (65+) which increased by 69%, and among the older working age (45-64) population which increased by 65%. The least significant growth of 18% was recorded for the preschool (0-4) population.



Two divergent trends have developed over a 10-year period. The younger age groups (0-44) are decreasing as a proportion of the population and the older age groups (45+) are increasing. Specifically, the most significant change occurred in the 20-44 age group which decreased by 5%. Conversely, prominent gains of 4% were noted in the 45-64 age group.



The most pronounced changes occurred in Brampton and Caledon. Caledon has had a population surge in the younger age groups, while Brampton's population surge has occurred at the other end of the age spectrum. Specifically, Caledon recorded the most notable increases in the 0-4 (38%), 5-19 (43%), and the 20-44 (36%) age groups. Brampton's growth was strongest in the 45-64 (69%) and the 65+ (79%) age groups.



In reviewing the trends, there is some suggestion that the distribution of the population will shift to the older categories. Given this shift to an older population, mobility and other age-related accessibility limitations may result in the current 17% of the population that experience some level of limitations due to a disability increasing in a higher proportion than the overall population.

4.2.4 PHYSICAL SIZE OF THE REGION OF PEEL

The Region of Peel is made up of 473 square miles or 1,225 square kilometres, with the following distribution by municipality:

Municipality	Sq. Miles	Sq. Kilometres
Town of Caledon (55.32% Land Area)	264.95	686.16
City of Brampton (21.46% Land Area)	102.34	265.04
City of Mississauga (23.22% Land Area)	105.75	273.86

The urban form tends to place the majority of the population and structures in the south end of the Region of Peel, with the densities reducing significantly in the more northern sections.

Along with the population growth, the Region of Peel has seen a significant increase in density in Brampton (the mid section of the Region of Peel). This growth will likely continue.

In terms of developing an accessibility plan, the size of the Region of Peel and the growth in the more northern sections will impact how and where services will need to be provided.

4.2.5 SUMMARY

In summary, the Region of Peel is growing, the population distribution seems to be shifting to the older categories and the Region of Peel's urban form seems to be growing northward. All of these factors will need to be considered in developing future accessibility plans.

5. THE REGION OF PEEL'S ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

5.1 COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

The Region of Peel is committed to:

- The continual improvement of access to all municipally-owned facilities, premises and services for all those with disabilities;
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community with disabilities;
- The participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of annual Accessibility Plans;
- Providing equal access to all;
- Delivering excellent services and programs; and
- Providing supportive working environment to its staff.

In its long-term strategic plan “***Directions for Success – Investing in Peel’s Future***”, the Region of Peel made a commitment to:

- Improve access to Region of Peel programs and services;
- Involve citizens and volunteers as valued partners;
- Promote and initiate actions to keep people and property safe; and
- Advocate and plan Regional services to meet the growing needs in the Region of Peel.

Council, by Resolution 2002-920, endorsed an implementation strategy in support of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*. The strategy included the creation of an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and an Accessibility Plan Work Group (APWG).

Accessibility planning will influence our strategic planning through identifying, removing and preventing many types of barriers. Through accessibility planning, the Region of Peel will take a comprehensive look at its by-laws, services, policies, procedures, practices, programs, facilities and infrastructure requirements to determine which need to be addressed so that they may be accessible to everyone – including staff and members of the public with disabilities.

All Region of Peel Accessibility Plans will strive to reflect a balance of stakeholder priorities and the Region of Peel's ability to achieve changes over time, within Regional priorities and budget resources.

The first Accessibility Plan will provide a baseline to establish where the Region of Peel is in the accessibility process. The content of all plans will be comprehensive and reflect a range of projects and initiatives from across the Region that address barriers affecting different types of disabilities.

5.2 TRANSHELP

The Region of Peel is also a public transportation organization in that it operates TransHelp, a special transportation service for persons with mobility disabilities. TransHelp is a service provided by the Region of Peel, and is included in Peel's Accessibility Planning process. This Accessibility Plan also serves as the accessibility plan for TransHelp in compliance with the ODA.

5.3 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN WORK GROUP

5.3.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK GROUP

An Accessibility Plan Work Group (APWG) has been constituted with appointed representatives from each department of the Region of Peel.

The APWG's mandate includes developing, reviewing, preparing, implementing and evaluating the annual Accessibility Plan for consideration by Peel's Executive Management Team, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), and finally, Regional Council.

The APWG serves as liaison between staff (including the Executive Management Team) and the AAC. The APWG consults with the AAC.

5.3.2 WORK GROUP LEAD

The Regional Clerk and Director of the Clerk's division of the Corporate Services department was appointed lead for the activities of the Accessibility Plan Work Group. The Clerk's division has been designated to provide the necessary resources to support the AAC and APWG.

5.3.3 MEMBERS OF WORK GROUP

The APWG is comprised of at least one representative from each department. Representatives are expected to be able to speak to the impact of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* on each division within that department and the impact on the department's overall services.

DEPARTMENT	NAME OF REPRESENTATIVE(S)
Corporate Services	Bonnie Zeran (Lead) Christine Zelman Jana Manolakos
Executive Office	Giancarlo Cristiano
Finance	Shaun Hewitt
Health	Cathy McCall Chine Nkado Linda Instance
Housing and Property	Maureen Taha
People, Information and Technology	John Austin Iris Ukrainyc
Planning	Ted Walker
Public Works	Cheryl Cook
Social Services	Sue Ritchie Vee Nicholas Donna Palmer

5.4 ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) acts in an advisory capacity to Region of Peel Council as outlined in the Region of Peel's Procedural By-law 54-1999, as amended, section VIII-5. The AAC reports to Regional Council through the Management section of General Committee.

The AAC is a joint Peel-Caledon Committee, however, there will be separate and distinct plans and plan reviews for each municipality.

5.4.1 MANDATE

The mandate of the AAC includes:

- addressing legislative requirements under the ODA and subsequent regulations;
- assisting the Region of Peel's staff-driven APWG in identifying and prioritizing barriers for elimination;
- advising Regional Council and the APWG on accessibility issues; and
- monitoring the progress of accessibility initiatives taken by the Region of Peel and report to Regional Council annually.

The overall goal of the AAC, in conjunction with the Region of Peel's APWG is to incorporate an accessibility component into the service strategy and business planning process of each Region of Peel program or service, and by extension, the Corporation as a whole.

5.4.2 MEMBERSHIP

The AAC is comprised of nine (9) members in total – three (3) Regional Council members and six (6) non-elected community members. At least five (5) of the non-elected (community) members must have a disability and at least one non-elected member must be a resident of the Town of Caledon. Each member of the AAC is an independent member of the Committee and does not represent the concerns of any one disability, geographic area or group. Members of the AAC will work together for the purpose of developing a common approach that is reasonable and practical. Appointed AAC members are:

Glenn Barnes (Community Member)
Harvinder Bajwa (Community Member)
Terri Hamilton (Community Member)
Marlowe Horn (Community Member)
Maureen Tymkow (Community Member)
(Community Member – currently vacant)
Emil Kolb (Regional Council Member)
Pat Saito (Regional Council Member)
Richard Whitehead (Regional Council Member)

5.5 ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES

As part of its commitment to create strong, caring, safe communities, the Region of Peel has already taken a number of measures to make the community, Regional government and services more accessible. These measures have been implemented across many of the Region of Peel's programs and services, as well as within its workplace.

Appendix I "ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES" to this Plan highlights achievements as a result of accessibility measures taken by the Region of Peel.

5.6 MEASURES IN PLACE TO DETERMINE EFFECT ON ACCESSIBILITY

To determine the effect on access with respect to assessing by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services for people with disabilities, the Region of Peel has established the Accessibility Plan Work Group (APWG). The approach of the APWG in identifying barriers is to have each departmental member work with their individual programs and services. The approaches vary and range from:

- individual Directors and Program Managers meetings;
- discussion at departmental meetings;
- planning sessions with target groups;
- workshops;
- Pathways (Peel Intranet) stories and feedback opportunities;
- messages from Chief Administrative Officer (CAO);
- messages from Executive Management Team (EMT);
- informal discussion;
- departmental sub-committees; and
- staff focus groups.

Feedback is collected in a common “barrier identification” template by each program and service. The approach is to identify all barriers and to group them into common categories across the organization.

Given the wide range of by-laws, services, policies, procedures, practices, programs, facilities and infrastructure requirements that exist within departments, the process for barrier identification is flexible enough to meet the unique needs of each department.

5.7 BY-LAWS, POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS REVIEW

In reviewing the various processes relating to review of by-laws, policies, programs, practices, services, facilities and infrastructure requirements, the APWG determined that there was an existing process in place that was program based. It varied by program, with the greatest emphasis on accessibility issues being placed by those programs that had direct service delivery responsibilities. With regard to by-laws and policies review, all by-laws are drafted by departments and reviewed by the legal department; and all policies are reviewed annually by each department. What the group identified was a lack of central focus and consistency in the review of the various policies and by-laws. It was recognized that the work would continue within each program and service area.

The APWG also noted that no central reporting of modifications/changes, identification of policy barriers and other issues existed. This lack of central reporting may result in limited ability to share the lessons learned across the Corporation, although a significant amount of informal information sharing does occur. Therefore regular reporting of changes made by programs should be kept in a central reference document.

5.8 FINDINGS

5.8.1 BARRIERS

The APWG identified numerous specific barriers consistent with the definitions provided in the ODA. Appendix II “SUMMARY OF ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS IDENTIFIED” to this Plan highlights examples of the major barriers identified along with proposed actions required.

The barriers in general fell into four categories:

Attitudinal:

- There are no consistent and ongoing educational programs to increase the awareness of Regional employees regarding recognition and elimination of existing and potential barriers.

Communication:

- There is lack of a consistent approach to ensure that all communication in various forms does not present barriers.

Facilities:

- Some Regional facilities still have physical barriers that need review and elimination.
- There is lack of a consistent approach to reduce barriers in the design of new or renovated facilities as well as the acquisition of new leasehold properties.

Service Delivery:

- There are no consistent policies regarding barrier reduction in service delivery and citizen participation in Regional government.

Not all of these barriers can be reviewed in the next year. The APWG will continue to address the facility barriers as part of the ongoing capital program and major renovation repair work. The APWG observed that in the coming year a more formal work plan needs to be developed for consideration of the other items identified.

Based on departmental feedback, it became apparent that there are a number of initiatives and activities that have been completed or are currently underway as highlighted in section 5.5 of this Plan. Of note was the work on facilities that actively identified and addressed accessibility issues.

5.8.2 RESOURCING NEEDS TO MEET ODA REQUIREMENTS

It was noted that the requirements of the ODA have placed significant demands on current resources of the Corporate Services department. Much more is involved than secretariat support for AAC. The work of the APWG requires a substantial amount of coordination and support that includes: coordination of barrier identification and accessibility planning process; preparation of reports; drafting the annual accessibility plan; creating annual work plans and budgets; and monitoring implementation of the annual accessibility plan. Therefore, it is recommended that an Accessibility Coordinator position be established and hired within the Corporate Services department, to manage and coordinate the Region of Peel's compliance with the ODA.

5.9 ONGOING BARRIER IDENTIFICATION, REVIEW AND MONITORING

To ensure consistency of approach and coordination of accessibility planning across all programs and services the Region of Peel provides, it is important that the existing APWG structure and process continue.

In the future, accessibility planning must be integrated into existing planning processes of the Region of Peel. Perhaps one of the most significant planning processes is the annual review and or renewal of the Service Strategy/Business Plans (SSBP) for all Regional programs and services. The SSBP is a high level plan that sets out objectives to be achieved and actions to be taken over the next one to three years to improve the quality of services and programs delivered, and to support the overall goal of excellence in public service. Each SSBP is informed by and implements aspects of the Region of Peel's Strategic Plan and in turn the SSBP guides day-to-day work and the development of annual budgets for each program. Integration of accessibility planning into the SSBP process will ensure that accessibility planning at the Region of Peel is both effective and integral to the culture of the organization.

An Accessibility Plan will be prepared annually thus allowing Council, staff and the public to monitor the barriers identified and the direction in which the Region of Peel is moving to eliminate all barriers under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*. In this regard, the APWG will meet regularly to review progress; APWG members will remind their departments about their roles in implementing the plan; and the Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

6. NEXT STEPS

While the Region of Peel has already made progress to eliminate physical, architectural, technological, information, communication, attitudinal and policy or practice barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating in the community, more can still be done. Based on its own commitment and vision of strong, caring, safe communities and the requirements of the ODA, the Region of Peel will continue to identify certain specific aspects of its operations that will be assessed for possible barriers.

6.1 ADDRESSING BARRIERS

The Region of Peel intends to undertake the following measures in the coming year to identify remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities:

1. Establish and hire an Accessibility Coordinator position within the Corporate Services department, to coordinate, manage and monitor the implementation of the Region of Peel's Accessibility Plan and accessibility planning process to ensure compliance with the ODA (including consultation with the AAC).
2. Develop an Accessibility Planning Policy.
3. Incorporate accessibility planning into the next Strategic Plan renewal.
4. Integrate accessibility planning into the Service Strategy/ Business Plans (SSBP) process.
5. Address the key findings of the initial barrier identification as noted in Section 5.8 (See also Appendix II).

6. Identify which by-laws, policies, programs, practices, services, facilities and infrastructure requirements will be reviewed in greater detail and initiate necessary changes.
7. Develop guidelines to ensure accessibility assessment of all new programs, services and facilities.
8. Conduct consultation with area municipalities on accessibility issues.
9. Monitor the progress of the work plan and report to Council.
10. Establish educational programs to increase the awareness of Regional employees regarding recognition and elimination of existing and potential barriers.
11. Establish a central reference document for regular reporting of changes made by program and service areas.

6.2 MAKING THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC

This plan will be available on the Region of Peel's Web site and at Regional Headquarters, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Brampton. In addition, the Plan will also be available on audio CD and CD-ROM. Other formats will be considered upon request.

Regional Web site: www.region.peel.on.ca

7. CONCLUSION

Barriers for people with disabilities take many forms. Often when we think of a disability we think of impairments in coordination, mobility, strength, vision, hearing and speech. However, disabilities also extend to those relating to memory, language, perception, reasoning and learning. People often fail to recognize that asthma, diabetes, cancer, environmental sensitivities, heart disease and stroke also fall under the category.

For individuals with a disability there are more barriers than meet the eye: attitudes, information, policies and practices, communication, service delivery, tools, equipment and technology.

In its long-term strategic plan ***“Directions for Success – Investing in Peel’s Future”***, the Region of Peel made a commitment to:

- Improve access to Region of Peel programs and services;
- Involve citizens and volunteers as valued partners;
- Promote and initiate actions to keep people and property safe; and
- Advocate and plan Regional services to meet the growing needs in the Region of Peel.

The Region of Peel is already actively engaged in identifying and removing barriers. The requirements of the ODA have helped the Region of Peel understand more about the broad range of disabilities, and focus more strategically on all barriers.

Making the Region of Peel accessible will be an ongoing process. In the first year of accessibility planning, the Region of Peel is focusing on identifying problems and barriers and beginning the process. In subsequent years, it will work within its resources and other priorities to remove and prevent those barriers. The Region of Peel recognizes that the investment it makes in identifying and removing barriers for people with disabilities will benefit everyone. Accessibility planning is an integral part of creating strong, caring, safe communities and giving all residents a sense of belonging. Accessibility planning encourages strategic thinking about barrier removal and prevention. As well, it will attract and retain effective employees, improve service delivery, enhance customer service, and increase efficiency.

The process enables municipalities to integrate planning for accessibility into other corporate, strategic and other business-related planning exercises.

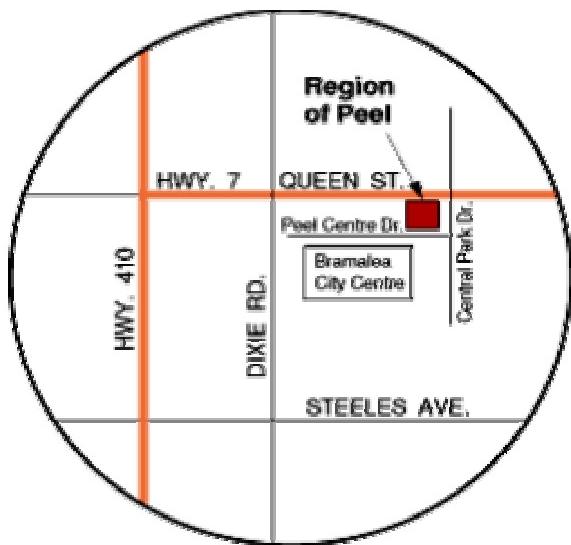
Overall, accessibility planning will help ensure that municipal services, policies, procedures and practices meet the needs of everyone - including staff and members of the public with disabilities.

8. MUNICIPAL CONTACT INFORMATION

The Regional Municipality of Peel
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton, Ontario
L6T 4B9

905-791-7800

Key Contact: Regional Clerk and Director of Clerk's Division
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